

# Michigan United Conservation Clubs



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*Conserving, Enhancing and Protecting Michigan's Natural Resources and Outdoors Heritage since 1937.*

November 29, 2011

House Committee on Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation  
Rep. Frank Foster, Chair  
Submitted by: Kent Wood, Legislative Affairs Manager

Re: Senate Bill 248

Dear Chairman Foster and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns today on Senate Bill 248.

Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) appreciates the consideration the committee has given and we realize that amendments have been offered that attempt to address some of those concerns. Unfortunately, we believe the current structure of the bill remains flawed in that it seems to make a blanket change arising from issues in certain, but not all, areas of the state. As you well know, every region of this state has different natural features and not all have the same recreational opportunities.

Together, with our 42,000 members, MUCC works hard to advance outdoor recreation in the state of Michigan. One of the problems we encounter is that nearly 50% of public land in Michigan is found in the Upper Peninsula, while only 4% is found in southern Michigan, home to all of our major population centers. Sound land policy is needed to address this major disparity.

We appreciate the attempt to require the department to produce a plan for future land purchases and sales. Once the plan is produced and in effect, we question the need for a cap. It would seem to make logical sense that if a land acquisition plan and goal is in place, there is no need for an arbitrary cap that only serves to hinder that same plan.

MUCC is also concerned about the changes being made to the previous exemptions from the cap. Sportsmen and women get very little if anything from this legislation, and the changes made to the exemptions for Commercial Forestland and the removal of land acquired through litigation make the bill even more undesirable for sportsmen.

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Large land policy changes should be made only after careful and diligent planning and with due consideration for the consequences of such a policy change. For decades sportsmen and women have used public land for their recreation and lifestyle needs. MUCC simply cannot get behind legislation that makes such sweeping changes to land policy in Michigan with so little regard for future consequences of outdoor recreation.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share our concerns.

Sincerely,

Kent Wood  
Legislative Affairs Manager